

# ***Teaching Literacy in Tennessee***

## **Professional Learning Package:**

### **Participant Learning Guide**

#### *Learning Session #2*

### **Summary**

This second learning session dives deeper into the instructional vignettes in *Teaching Literacy in Tennessee*, with a focus on how key literacy concepts translate to classroom practice. The session introduces educators to an instructional planning framework and a set of instructional strategies that work together to provide students with appropriate levels of challenge and support in various reading and writing settings. Specific attention is given to how students' strengths and needs should shape instructional planning.

### **Objectives**

- Examine the two instructional vignettes from Mr. Hermann's classroom and discuss how they reflect important concepts for literacy instruction
- Analyze the elements of a literacy block and how they work together
- Explore an instructional framework for unit design
- Consider how the strengths and needs of students should inform instructional planning

## Revisiting Mr. Hermann's Class

Review the instructional vignette about Mr. Hermann's classroom found in the *Teaching Literacy in Tennessee English Learner Companion* that you read in preparation for this learning session. With a small group, discuss the following questions.

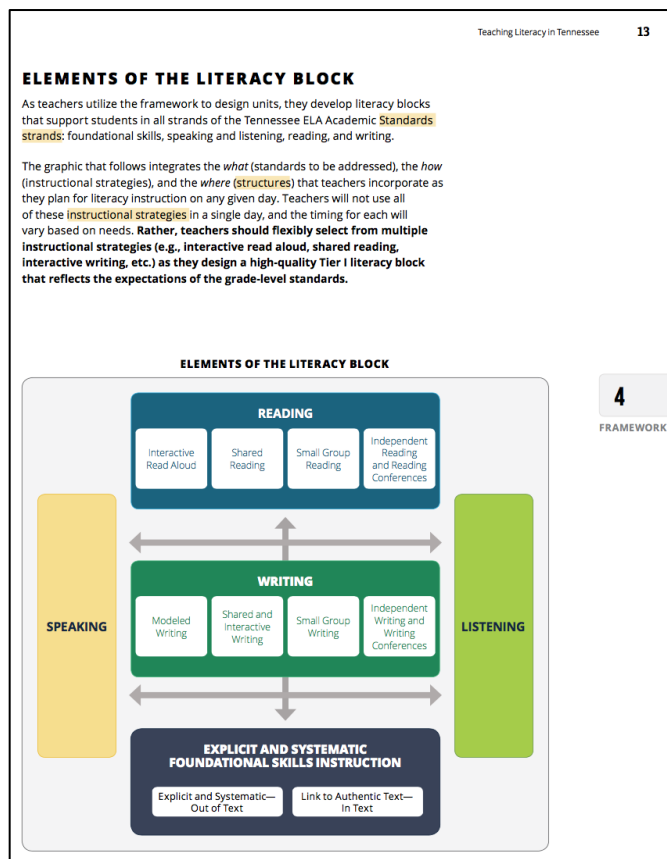
- ***How does Mr. Hermann support students in developing both skills-based and knowledge-based competencies?***
- ***How do we see Mr. Hermann apply the theory of action in his classroom?***
  - *Students engage in a high volume of reading*
  - *Students read and listen to complex texts that are on or beyond grade level*
  - *Students think deeply about and respond to text through speaking and writing*
  - *Students develop the skill and craft of a writer*
  - *Students practice foundational skills that have been taught explicitly and systematically and applied through reading and writing*
- ***How does Mr. Hermann differentiate his instruction so it meets the needs of the diverse learners in his classroom?***

Note: More attention will be given to the unique needs of diverse learners and how to best provide differentiated support in later Professional Learning Packages.

## Elements of the Literacy Block

Mr. Hermann uses a range of instructional strategies that work together to provide students with literacy instruction that is both supportive and challenging. Read more about the elements of a literacy block, found on page 13 of *Teaching Literacy in Tennessee: K-3* and on page 18 of the *EL Companion*, and discuss the following questions. (You may want to think back to Mr. Hermann's class as an example.)

- ***How do the different instructional strategies work together across a literacy block?***
- ***How are skills-based and knowledge-based competencies integrated throughout the literacy block through these instructional strategies?***



## Considering Students' Strengths and Needs

Form two groups. Have each group discuss a set of questions. Then, share your responses with the other group. Consider what you read in both of the instructional vignettes about Mr. Hermann's classroom.

Group	Questions	Notes
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are Mr. Hermann's instructional goals for each unit? What information and sources does he consider when creating these goals (i.e., standards)?</li> <li>How does Mr. Hermann consider students' strengths, interests, and prior knowledge when planning for instruction?</li> <li>How does Mr. Hermann consider students' needs when planning for instruction?</li> <li>How does Mr. Hermann use student data to make decisions about instruction throughout his literacy block?</li> </ul>	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What kind of knowledge do students build through each unit?</li> <li>How do students demonstrate knowledge in different ways through the different instructional strategies Mr. Hermann uses?</li> <li>How does the organization and sequence of the unit support students' learning?</li> <li>Looking at the way Mr. Hermann teaches, what assumptions does he seem to make about how students learn best (e.g., students learn best when they have opportunities to talk about what they read)?</li> </ul>	

**Based on your discussion, what *big ideas* about teaching and learning can you draw from Mr. Hermann's classroom? Make a list of these big ideas in the space below.**

*Example: Students learn best when they can connect new skills or information to previously learned skills and to their prior knowledge and experiences.*

## ***Teaching Literacy in Tennessee* Instructional Vignettes: Big Ideas**

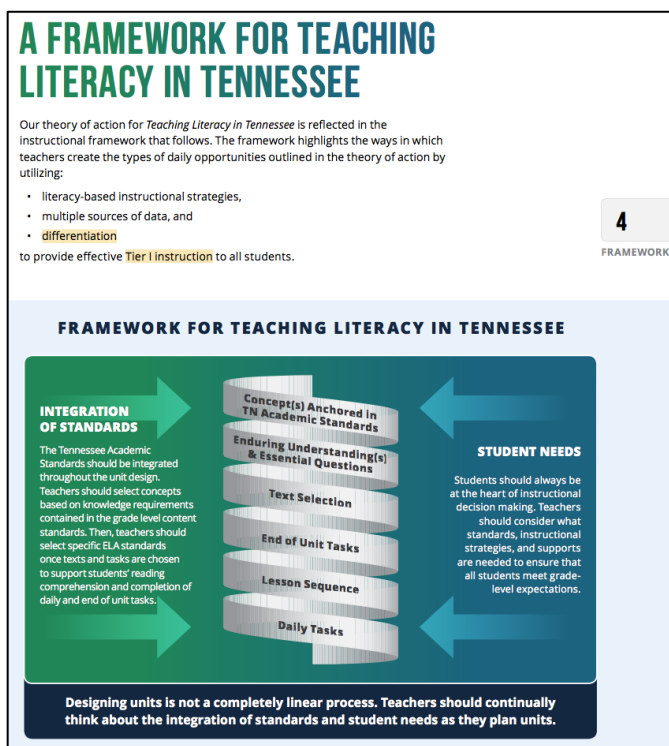
Read the list of big ideas below. Compare this list with the one you created in the previous activity. Discuss any insights or questions.

- Instructional goals are based on Tennessee Academic Standards, understandings of students' strengths and needs, and relevant curricular resources such as pacing guides/scope and sequences.
- Teachers are constantly collecting information about student learning – anecdotal/informal, diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments – and using it to make purposeful decisions about instruction throughout the literacy block.
- Teachers consider students' prior knowledge and previous instruction so they can make strategic connections to unit concepts and enduring understandings and build upon past learning.
- Foundational literacy skills are purposefully revisited and connected throughout the literacy block. For example, a foundational skill that is introduced during shared reading is later applied to authentic texts during small group reading and/or interactive writing.-
- Students have opportunities to practice foundational skills during authentic reading and writing activities.
- Literacy instruction enables students to build skills-based competencies and knowledge-based competencies simultaneously.

## Instructional Framework

Mr. Hermann uses an instructional framework that combines texts, tasks, and questions to guide students toward deep understanding of the unit's concepts. He plans his unit purposefully around the Tennessee Academic Standards and a series of enduring understandings and essential questions. Review this instructional framework, found on pages 11-12 of *Teaching Literacy in Tennessee: K-3* and page 14 of the *EL Companion*, and discuss the following question with a small group.

- **Where do you see this framework at work in Mr. Hermann's class? Cite specific examples.**



## ***Teaching Literacy in Tennessee: Closing Reflection***

Reflect on the following questions.

<p>What information or ideas from <i>Teaching Literacy in Tennessee</i> stand out most to you?</p>	
<p>What connections can you make between <i>Teaching Literacy in Tennessee</i> and your own instructional practice?</p> <p>What are you doing well?</p> <p>How can you improve?</p>	
<p>What questions do you have about <i>Teaching Literacy in Tennessee</i>?</p> <p>What does it make you want to learn more about?</p>	